

2014 AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL GRANT COMPETITION

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY FORM FOR PANEL COORDINATORS

Legal Applicant Name: Merida School District <small>#5 on Facesheet of Application</small>	Application ID: 14AC987654
Project Title: The Merida School District AmeriCorps Program <small>#11.a on Facesheet of Application</small>	
<p>The <u>Applicant Feedback Summary</u> is designed to provide the applicant with a synopsis of the assessment by the panel members. The summary comments should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Be transferred from every Reviewer's Individual Review Form (IRF) into the respective Categories. Reflect differing viewpoints by Reviewers on a particular criterion, as applicable. <p>Instructions for Panel Coordinators: Copy <u>all comments from each Reviewer's IRF</u> and paste them into the corresponding sections of the Form below. Reviewer comments should be copied directly from IRFs and not changed or manipulated. As in the IRF, the Reviewer comments should appropriately address the Selection Criteria. When complete, ensure that this form is free of grammatical and spelling errors.</p>	
RATIONALE AND APPROACH: Problem/Need	
Significant Strengths for Problem/Need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merida's graduation rate is much lower than the state graduation rate, and the dropout rate is also significantly higher. Studies show that children struggling to read in third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school. The applicant cites specific and recent data showing the low graduation rate and the link between dropping out of high school and lower earnings. It is very clear how needy these students are. Good for the program for serving this population. 	
Significant Weaknesses for Problem/Need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant defines the problem as a lack of academic skills in young students; however, no data is provided to demonstrate how prevalent or severe low academic achievement is in the community. It is not evident if the 1st – 6th grade students in Merida really need assistance with reading and math. There is not enough info to tell. It would be better if the application includes more details about how elementary school students are doing in the target areas. The applicant just sort of threw statistics around without really focusing on anything. It's pretty clear that the grant writer doesn't have much experience writing AmeriCorps applications. 	
AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS EVIDENCE BASE AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: Theory of Change and Logic Model	
Significant Strengths for AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lot of much evidence this shows intervention is likely activities tutoring to work. AmeriCorps members will allow the program to help more students than regular school staff can accomplish. Based on this reviewer's experience as an elementary school principal, the activities proposed for AmeriCorps students are exactly what struggling 1st-6th grade students need to be 	

Comment [SY1]: ATTENTION PANEL COORDINATORS! This is an Example AFS form that contains examples of both **Satisfactory** and **Unsatisfactory** comments. Please see the annotations below that point out areas where this AFS needs to be revised in order to meet CNCS's quality indicators.

Comment [SY2]: ALL comments from ALL Reviewer IRFs must be copied verbatim into the AFS, regardless if the comments are duplicative and/or contradictory. If revisions need to be made based on Program Officer Liaison (POL) and/or GARP Liaison feedback, please make sure that the revisions are made both to the original IRF and the AFS.

Comment [SY3]: Restating the Application: Information from should not be copied (i.e. restating a summary of the applicant's proposal) from the application into the IRF. Advise your Reviewers to provide an **evaluative** statement that assesses what is strong or weak about the information in the proposal. This is most often seen in the "Need" section.

Comment [CMD4]: Content: This is a well-written example of a significant strength that confirms the applicant has met the Criterion's standard (e.g. "The application cites specific, relevant data to document the need.")

Comment [SY5]: Inappropriate Comment: Reviewers should not provide comments that imply bias and do not reflect the Criteria. They should be instructed to remove and/or revise this comment.

Comment [FEP6]: Sentence Structure: This is a good example of the proper structure for a comment. It references "the applicant", the criterion, and detail from the application. Most importantly, it tells what is good about the applicant's response to the criterion.

Comment [SY7]: Spelling/Grammar (Acronyms): Reviewers should spell out abbreviations and acronyms, when possible.

Comment [SY8]: Inappropriate/Inflammatory Comment: Reviewers should not include recommendations for improvement; instead, their comments should assess the strengths and weaknesses within the existing application. This comment needs to be rephrased (and also needs to be checked for grammatical errors).

Comment [SY9]: Inappropriate/Inflammatory Comment: This comment is an inappropriate/inflammatory statement and needs to be revised.

Comment [SY10]: Spelling/Grammar: All spelling and grammatical errors should be corrected prior to sending the AFS to the POL for feedback. **Remember: using the wrong, but correctly-spelled word may not be caught by spell check. Read each comment carefully.**

Comment [SY11]: Inappropriate/Inflammatory Comment: Comments should not include identifying information about Reviewers. This comment needs to be revised.

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<p>successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logic model well aligned, covers all aspects of proposed program A 15% gain before and after tutoring is a significant positive impact that can make a difference in students' lives. 	
Significant Weaknesses for AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant reports 15% gains on a standardized pre/post test but does not explain whether this gain constitutes a significant effect. The tutoring plan isn't described very well what will AmeriCorps volunteers actually be doing with the students during the sessions? Of all the applications read by this panel, this one had the weakest evidence base. Most of the studies cited by the applicant were not relevant to the program being proposed. It's not clear whether the AmeriCorps members will be adequately supervised at the schools. 	
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY: Past Performance	
Significant Strengths for Past Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program has a history of improving students' academic scores. The Merida School District has a lot of experience in managing government and foundation grants and has staff already in place to run the program. 	
Significant Weaknesses for Past Performance:	

Comment [SY12]: Grammar: Though formatted in bullets, all comments should be written in full statements.

Comment [CMD13]: Content: This comment addresses both the intervention (tutoring) and the outcome (a 15% gain); both important aspects of the Theory of Change.

Comment [SY14]: Content: This significant weakness contradicts that last significant strength. However, this is not a consensus-based review, therefore it is okay for comments to reflect different perspectives. **Remember: all comments must be included verbatim if they are present on the Reviewers' IRFs.**

Comment [SY15]: Grammar: Comments should not be phrased as questions, because applicants will not have the opportunity to answer them. This comment is also a run-on sentence and needs to be revised for both reasons.

Comment [SY16]: Inappropriate/Inflammatory Comment: Reviewers should not compare one application to another; each application should be judged on its own individual merits. Advise the Reviewer to restate this comment.

Comment [FEP17]: Content: This weakness acknowledges that studies were provided, but articulates their lack of relevance to the proposed need. (This is more constructive and supportive than making a blanket statement like "There were no studies to support...")

Comment [SY18]: Outside the Scope of the Review: AmeriCorps member supervision is outside the scope of the External Review Selection Criteria. Advise the Reviewer to remove or revise this comment.

Comment [CMD19]: Content: This is a good example of the type of response anticipated for Past Performance. Reviewers **only** address Past Performance in this section.

Comment [SY20]: Outside the Scope of the Review: The only aspect of Organizational Capacity that the Reviewers should evaluate is Past Performance (i.e. the extent to which the applicant demonstrates success in solving the identified problem). Staffing and grants management experience are outside the scope of the External Review Selection Criteria. Advise the Reviewer to remove or revise this comment.

Comment [SY21]: Content: It is okay for the AFS not to include any comments in one of the two categories (Significant Strengths or Significant Weaknesses) in a particular section of the AFS if the IRFs do not include any comments. However, the AFS **must include at least one Strength or Weakness for every section of the IRF and AFS**.